which will facilitate setting up of permanent Lok Adalats for providing compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases relating to public utility services. A bill to this effect has already been introduced in Lok Sabha. The National Legal Services Authority or the State Legal Services Authority, as the case may be, may establish permanent Lok Adalat at such places and in such numbers as may be expedient to enable the Lok Adalats to exercise its jurisdiction in respect of one or more public utility services as necessary from time to time. The permanent Lok Adalats would have jurisdiction regarding public utility services such as transport (air, road, water), postal, telegraph or telephone, power, water, sanitation, hospitals and insurance. To avoid prolonged litigation it has also been proposed that the award made by the Lok Adalat shall be final, binding and shall not be questioned in any original suit, application or execution proceeding. The jurisdiction of the Lok Adalats would be limited to cases upto a monetary value of Rs. 10 lakhs. Under clause 22C of the Legal Services Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2002 which is yet to be passed by Parliament, Government has power to increase the limit of ten lakh rupees in consultation with National Legal Services Authority.

Directions of Election Commission to political parties/ State Governments

3574. SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Election Commission has issued a number of directions to political parties/State Governments during February, 2002, to exercise restraint;

(b) if so, the number of such directions with brief summary;

(c) the ground effects of each one of them and whether the Election Commission is satisfied; and

(d) if not, what are those areas?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) (a) to (d) The Election Commission of India has informed that it has not issued any directions to political parties/State Governments during the month of February, 2002 to exercise restraint. The Commission has, however, issued a press note in the month of February, 2002 urging all political parties to exercise self-restraint and refrain from indulging in personal attacks, and adding that democratic elections were about friendly rivalry not slander, bitterness and violence.